

August 8, 2007

15 CHARGED IN CONNECTION WITH CRYSTAL METH OPERATION BASED IN PHILADELPHIA, DELAWARE AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES

PHILADELPHIA – United States Attorney Pat Meehan today announced the unsealing of a one hundred seven count indictment¹ against Vahe Petrosyan of Broomall, Pa. and fourteen others in connection with a conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute more than 100 pounds of methamphetamine.

The conspiracy count names 10 individuals as members who acquired methamphetamine from sources of supply in Las Vegas, Nevada and California and shipped the drug by tractor trailer to the Philadelphia area, where it was “cut” and distributed through a network of distributors in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

“The meth this group was importing ended up for sale on the streets of Philadelphia,” said Meehan. “When you consider the dangerous impact crystal meth can have, we have to do everything possible to make sure that it does not take root as a major component of the drug culture in this area. Shutting down an organization like this is an important step in that ongoing effort.”

Those charged in the conspiracy include Vahe Petrosyan, Arthur Ishkhanian, Mitchell Orlando, Ktrich Petrosyan, Evaleen Maisonet, Robert Weller, Joseph D’Adamo, Scott Chestnut, Brian Langdon, and Cory Ayler. These ten defendants were also charged with numerous substantive offenses including unlawful use of a telephone to facilitate the commission of a drug trafficking felony, distribution of, and possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, in quantities ranging from ounce to multiple pounds. Five other defendants named in the indictment, including Levon Arakelyan, Nicola Paone, Valerio Reale, Karly Kauker and Michael Heineman were charged with substantive offenses, including the distribution of, and possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, and unlawful use of a telephone to facilitate the commission of a drug trafficking felony.

¹ An Indictment or Information is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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The indictment charges that, from in or about 2004 through April 13, 2006, Levon Arakelyan, who was charged in a previously filed indictment with being a member of the conspiracy, Vahe Petrosyan and Arthur Ishkhanian operated a methamphetamine distribution operation that obtained multi-pound quantities of methamphetamine, also known as "crystal," from various sources of supply in Las Vegas, Nevada and California, and transported the drug across the country in tractor-trailers from Las Vegas, Nevada and California to the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. According to the indictment, Levon Arakelyan, charged elsewhere as a co-conspirator, negotiated with persons unknown to the grand jury to purchase multi-pound quantities of methamphetamine in California and Las Vegas at prices ranging from \$7,000 to \$12,500 per pound.

In the spring of 2004, Levon Arakelyan agreed with Arthur Ishkhanian to supply Ishkhanian with multi-pound quantities of methamphetamine for sale and distribution to other persons in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area. The superseding indictment alleges that from the spring of 2004 to the spring of 2005, Levon Arakelyan transported by tractor trailer approximately 60 pounds of methamphetamine from California and the Las Vegas, Nevada area, which he supplied to Arthur Ishkhanian for resale to Ishkhanian's customers.

In the spring of 2005, Levon Arakelyan agreed with Vahe Petrosyan that they would be partners in the distribution and sale of methamphetamine in the Philadelphia area, and that Petrosyan would obtain the methamphetamine from Arakelyan and arrange for the transportation of the methamphetamine from California and Las Vegas to the Philadelphia area for distribution to Arthur Ishkhanian.

Petrosyan and Arakelyan agreed that they would divide their profits from the sale and distribution of methamphetamine evenly and that Petrosyan would arrange for the "cutting," sale, and distribution of multi-pound quantities of methamphetamine to Arthur Ishkhanian in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area.

Arakelyan agreed with Petrosyan that he (Arakelyan) would, on occasion, travel to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to collect from Petrosyan sums of cash representing the proceeds of the sale of methamphetamine that Petrosyan had collected from Arthur Ishkhanian, and transport the currency back to Las Vegas, Nevada, to be used to complete further purchases of methamphetamine intended for sale and distribution in the Philadelphia area.

Levon Arakelyan periodically obtained multi-pound quantities, ranging between two pounds and eight pounds, of methamphetamine at a time from his sources of supply in Las Vegas and California which he paid for on delivery. Arakelyan provided Vahe Petrosyan and, on occasion, Petrosyan's father, Ktrich Petrosyan, methamphetamine for sale and distribution in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area, through Arthur Ishkhanian.

From the spring of 2005 to April 13, 2006, Vahe Petrosyan, or his father Ktrich Petrosyan, obtained methamphetamine from Levon Arakelyan, which they transported by tractor trailer from the Las Vegas, Nevada area to the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area.

Upon arrival in Philadelphia, Vahe Petrosyan then “cut” and diluted the methamphetamine to effectively double the available amount of methamphetamine for distribution, and then supplied the methamphetamine to Arthur Ishkhanian for resale.

The members of the conspiracy are charged in numerous counts with the unlawful use of telephones to arrange and negotiate the purchase and delivery of large quantities of methamphetamine in the Philadelphia metropolitan area.

The indictment further alleges that over \$290,000 cash, representing drug proceeds, had been seized by law enforcement authorities from various defendants charged in the superseding Indictment between March 17, 2006 and April 13, 2006. The indictment seeks criminal forfeiture of drug proceeds and facilitating property.

On April 13, 2006, defendant Vahe Petrosyan was arrested at his Lee Drive, Broomall, Pennsylvania residence. At the time of arrest, Petrosyan was found to be in possession of approximately 5 pounds of methamphetamine, approximately \$31,000 in cash and cutting substances. On the same date, defendant Arthur Ishkhanian was arrested following a consent search of his Collegeville, Pennsylvania residence, which resulted in the seizure of approximately 6 pounds of methamphetamine, as well as \$197,500 in cash. Later the same date, Mitchell Orlando was arrested near the Holiday Inn near 11th and Race Streets, where, according to the Superseding Indictment, he attempted to possess with intent to distribute 2-3 pounds of methamphetamine. At the time of his arrest, Orlando had over \$40,000 in cash in his possession. And, on March 31, 2006, Levon Arakelyan had \$22,546 in cash, alleged drug proceeds he had obtained from Vahe Petrosyan, seized from his possession by federal agents at the Philadelphia International Airport as he waited to board a flight to Las Vegas.

Petrosyan and Ishkhanian were originally charged with possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine and Orlando was charged with attempted possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine, in an initial indictment filed May 10, 2006. Levon Arakelyan was charged with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine in a separate indictment filed August 8, 2006. Arakelyan was found guilty of the conspiracy charge on May 3, 2007, following a jury trial, and awaits sentencing. In the superseding indictment, Arakelyan is charged with substantive counts of distributing and possessing with intent to distribute multi-pound quantities of methamphetamine, and aiding and abetting those violations, with respect to methamphetamine that was acquired by him and Petrosyan in the Las Vegas area and transported to the Philadelphia area for distribution and sale by Arthur Ishkhanian through a network of distributors charged in the superseding indictment. The methamphetamine distributors, who were charged in the superseding indictment, were Mitchell Orlando, Evaleen Maisonet, Robert Weller, Joseph D’Adamo, Brian Langdon, Scott Chestnut, Cory Ayler, Karly Kauker, Nicola Paone, Valerio Reale and Michael Heineman.

If convicted, the defendants face the following maximum possible sentences:

Vahe Petrosyan - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Levon Arakelayn - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Arthur Ishkhanian - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 20 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 10 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Ktrich Petrosyan - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Mitchell Orlando - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Evaleen Maisonet - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Robert Weller - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 20 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 10 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Joseph D'Adamo - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 20 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 10 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Scott Chestnut - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Brian Langdon - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Cory Ayler - Life imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 10 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 5 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Karly Kauker - 40 years imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 5 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 4 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Nicola Paone - 40 years imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 5 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 4 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Valerio Reale - 40 years imprisonment, a mandatory minimum 5 year prison term, a multi-million dollar fine, 4 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

Michael Heineman - 20 years imprisonment, a multi-million dollar fine, 3 years supervised release up to lifetime supervised release.

INFORMATION REGARDING THE DEFENDANTS

| NAME | ADDRESS | AGE OR DATE OF BIRTH |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Vahe Petrosyan | [REDACTED] Broomall, PA | 33 |
| Levon Arakelyan | [REDACTED] Las Vegas, NV | 26 |
| Arthur Ishkhanian | [REDACTED] Collegeville, PA | 33 |
| Mitchell Orlando | [REDACTED] Maple Glen, PA | 36 |
| Ktrich Petrosyan | [REDACTED] Broomall, PA | 61 |
| Evaleen Maisonet | [REDACTED] Philadelphia, PA | 28 |
| Robert Weller | [REDACTED] Philadelphia, PA | 53 |
| Joseph D'Adamo | [REDACTED] Philadelphia, PA | 46 |
| Scott Chestnut | [REDACTED] Philadelphia, PA | 45 |
| Brian Langdon | [REDACTED] Beverly, NJ | 30 |
| Cory Ayler | [REDACTED] Philadelphia, PA | 35 |
| Karly Kauker | [REDACTED] King of Prussia, PA | 33 |
| Nicola Paone | [REDACTED] Hatfield, PA | 37 |
| Valerio Reale | [REDACTED] Colmar, PA | 39 |
| Michael Heineman | [REDACTED] Cape May, NJ | 41 |

The case was investigated by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”), Philadelphia Field Division, assisted by the Philadelphia Police Department, Narcotics Strike Force, and the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, Dangerous Drug Offenders Unit. The case has been assigned to Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph T. Labrum III and Karen Klotz.

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